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An investigation of topics studied by Texas secondary school business teachers during their undergraduate professional preparation and teachers opinions on which topics were most valuable, at what level topics should be studied, whether any material should be omitted or shifted to graduate level, and what emphasis should be given to the 94 topics listed in the survey instrument. The study includes data from about 10 percent of all Texas secondary school business teachers.

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A SURVEY OF OPINIONS OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL BUSINESS TEACHERS OF TEXAS RELATIVE TO THEIR UNDERGRADUATE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

- Harrison James Cameron, Jr. -

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It was the purpose of this investigation to determine the opinions of Texas secondary business teachers relative to the value of their undergraduate professional education. This study includes data from about 10 per cent of all Texas secondary school business teachers. More specifically, the investigation attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What topics, of those listed in the survey instrument, did Texas secondary school business teachers study during their undergraduate professional preparation?

2. According to the teachers, which topics are of most value to teaching?

3. According to the teachers, at which level, graduate, undergraduate, both levels, or neither level, should the topics be studied?

4. In the opinion of teachers, can some of the material now studied be omitted from the undergraduate professional phase of teacher education?

5. Should the material now studied as part of the professional phase of teacher education receive greater or less emphasis?

6. Do teachers think that there are topics which should be omitted from the undergraduate program and be postponed for graduate study?

7. What recommendations can be made for the improvement of the professional phase of business teacher education in Texas?

Definition of Professional Education

Professional education is interpreted as meaning those courses or topics, usually a part of a business teacher's undergraduate preparation, which are concerned with, or are directly related to: philosophy and methods, psychology, curriculum and co-curriculum, teacher and community, pupil control and guidance, measurement and evaluation, student teaching, and college guidance activities. These courses, however, are not primarily concerned with the prospective teacher's acquisition of the knowledges or skills which he will teach. For example, a course in typewriting which is designed to teach the skill is somewhat different from a course in the methods of teaching typewriting. While some attention must be given to skill in the methods course, most of the persons taking methods courses usually possess the skill. The methods courses are designed for the study of effective presentation procedures.

Need for the Study

Numerous criticisms of teacher education programs, a great majority of which are directed toward professional education courses, are found in current literature. These criticisms of teacher education courses have come from prominent educators,

teachers in service, students, and the lay public.

The overabundance of criticism aimed at educators who recommend professional education courses makes it highly desirable that an investigation into the value of this professional education be made.

Limitations of the Study

Because of the fact that a questionnaire was used in this study, the inherent limitations of a questionnaire are present. The study was also limited to the geopraphic boundaries of the state of Texas and 207 usable returned questionnaires. Other limitations are listed in the study.

Survey of the Literature

This investigation presents six studies which are representative of the various attempts in recent years to arrive at solutions to the problems of this investigation. Also presented are abstracts from empirical literature which show current thinking of the leading business educators of the country relative to the problems investigated in this dissertation.

Findings

1. All the 94 topics listed in the survey instrument used in this investigation had been studied by some of the teachers during their undergraduate professional education. However, in many instances those topics of least value to teaching had been studied by the greater number of teachers while those topics judged by teachers to be of most value to teaching had been studied by a lesser number of teachers. Some of the topics found in the survey to have been studied by the greater number of teachers but which have little value to teaching are listed:

History and philosophy of business education;
History and philosophy of secondary education;
Methods of psychology applied to education;
Use of tests and measurements in prediction, classification, and guidance; and,
Content of various high school curricula.

2. According to the teachers, the topics which are most specifically related to the subject areas taught by the teachers are of the most value to teaching. Some of these topics are:

Standards of achievement to be required in school and business for students of:
typewriting,
shorthand,
bookkeeping; and,
Special methods courses for each of the business subjects taught in Texas high schools.

3. According to the teachers, all the topics listed in the study should be included in the undergraduate professional education of prospective teachers. However, less emphasis should be given some of the topics and other topics should receive more emphasis during undergraduate education. Some of the topics which should receive less emphasis are:

Methods courses in secondary education;
History and philosophy courses;
Value of excursions and field trips;
Guidance in problem-solving learning;
Guidance of informational learning;
Curriculum topics related to general curriculum; and,
Measurement and evaluation topics which are concerned primarily with statistics.

Some of the topics which should receive more emphasis are:

Special methods courses for business education subjects;
Guidance principles and practices and their relation to business education;
Principles and techniques of pupil control: self direction and discipline;
Psychology of retention: how to retard forgetting and teach for more permanent retention;
Curriculum construction in business education;
Responsibility of teacher for co-curricular activities;
Administration and scoring of tests;
Coordination of business education with needs of students and community;
Business trends in school service area; and,
Assistance in making on-the-job adjustments during the first year of teaching.

4. In the opinion of the teachers, none of the topics listed in this study can be omitted from undergraduate professional education of teachers.

5. Greater emphasis should be given those topics of most value to teaching; less emphasis should be given those topics of lesser value to teaching. These topics are listed in the third paragraph of this section.

6. No topic should be omitted from undergraduate professional preparation to be postponed for graduate study. However, some of the topics should not receive so much emphasis at the undergraduate level and should receive greater emphasis at the graduate level. Some of these topics are:

Content of various high school curricula;
Publicity for school and business department within the community;
Guidance counseling from college advisors;
Curriculum construction (general curriculum);
Problems of juvenile delinquency: in school and community;
Problems of emotional and social adjustment and the school;
Nature and main principles of learning;
Guidance in development of meanings and concepts;
Guidance in learning attitudes, ideals, and appreciations;
Transfer of training in relation to curriculum and methods;
Basic principles and techniques of measurement in studying the pupil; and,
Physical and physiological conditions of efficient learning.